

Patient Driven. People Centered.



James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center

Altoona, Pennsylvania
Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2012

Veterans are at the center of all that we do.

On behalf of the James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center, I am pleased to present the Fiscal Year 2012 Annual Report. Since I was appointed as the medical center Director in April 2012, it has been an honor to participate in and celebrate the many achievements that you will find highlighted in this report. I offer thanks to the staff and the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 1862 for making 2012 a very successful year for our medical center.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) initiatives to transform VA health care in the 21st century are designed to enhance the experience for America's Veterans. Among these national priorities are: improving access, specialty care, patient centered care, and elimination of Veteran homelessness. In the pages of this report, you will learn how these initiatives are being implemented in our medical center and community based outpatient clinics (CBOCs).

Improving access: Read about tele-health and other virtual care options that improve access to health care for Veterans in rural areas. Learn about the approval of two new CBOCs for our region, and our progress toward Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT) in all primary care clinics.

Specialty care: Our new physical medicine and rehabilitation program and other specialty care services, including expansion of behavioral health staff, and programming are described in this report.

Patient centered care: VA is undergoing a shift from a problem-based, disease care system to a proactive, health and well-being model, where Veterans are at the center of their care and they fully participate in maintaining their health. Read more about our accomplishments in 2012 and our goals for 2013.

Elimination of Veteran homelessness: The achievements of our Homeless Veterans program and a glimpse into the Veterans Justice Outreach, which will further alleviate homelessness among Veterans, is also included in this report.

Patient driven and people centered health care offers each Veteran patient or resident a role in their health and well-being and a choice in the options for treatment when it is needed. I believe you will find many examples of this in the pages of our 2012 Annual Report.



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Director

James E. Van Zandt
VA Medical Center

William H. Mills, SES
Director

Charles T. Becker
Associate Director

Santha Kurian, MD
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Associate Director for
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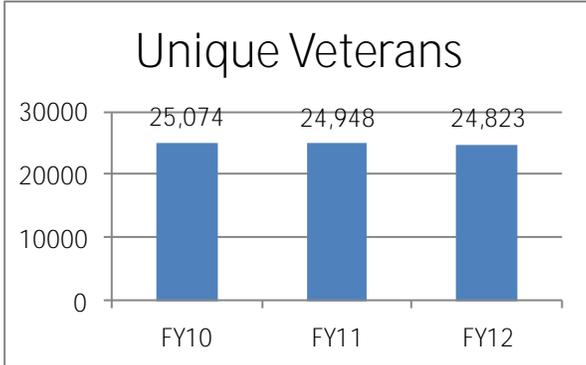
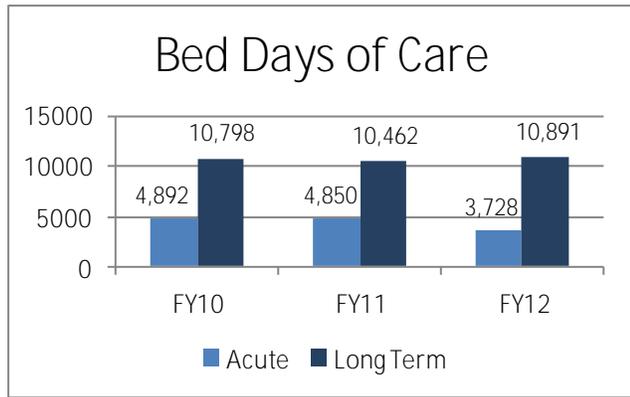
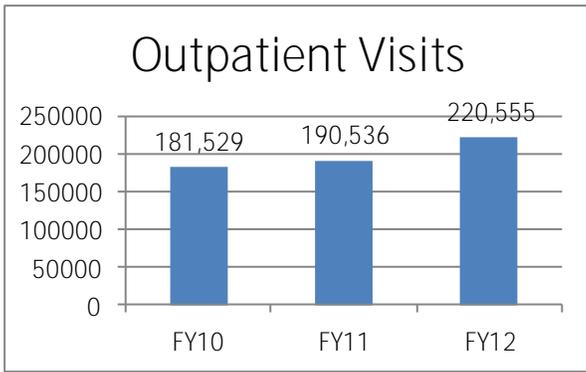
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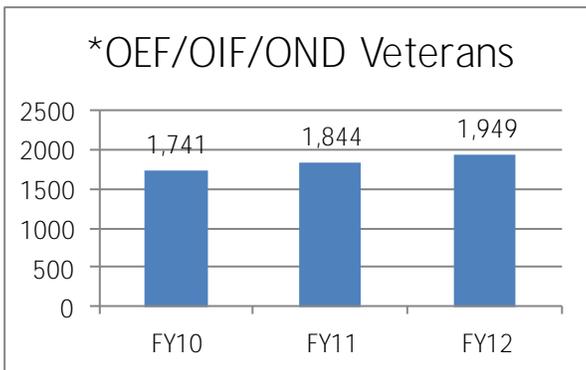
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William H. Mills, SES
Director

By the Numbers



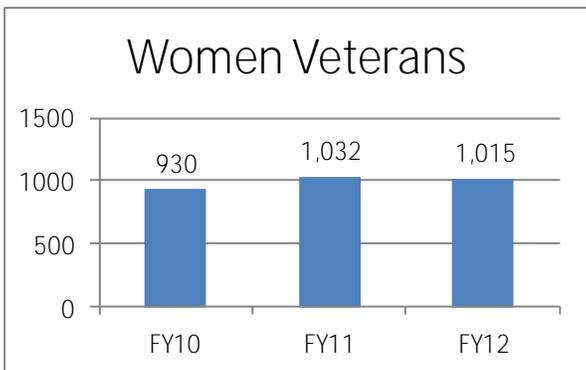
Total operating budget for Fiscal Year 2012: \$124,609,000



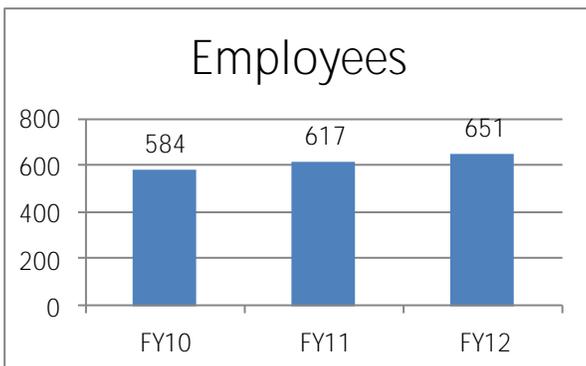
Budget for Construction and Engineering: \$13,009,860

415 volunteers donated 43,394 hours to Veterans

*Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn



Donations received including monetary, items, and activities: \$119,759



\$56,000 raised by employees for the Combined Federal Campaign

On July 19, Secretary of VA, Eric Shinseki, approved 13 new CBOCs nationwide. Two of these are in Pennsylvania and both are in our market service area.

We received approval to open CBOCs in Indiana and Huntingdon counties. Marked with pink flags on the map below, these would provide access to close to 5,000 Veterans who are traveling extended distances for care or are not receiving VA medical care at this time.

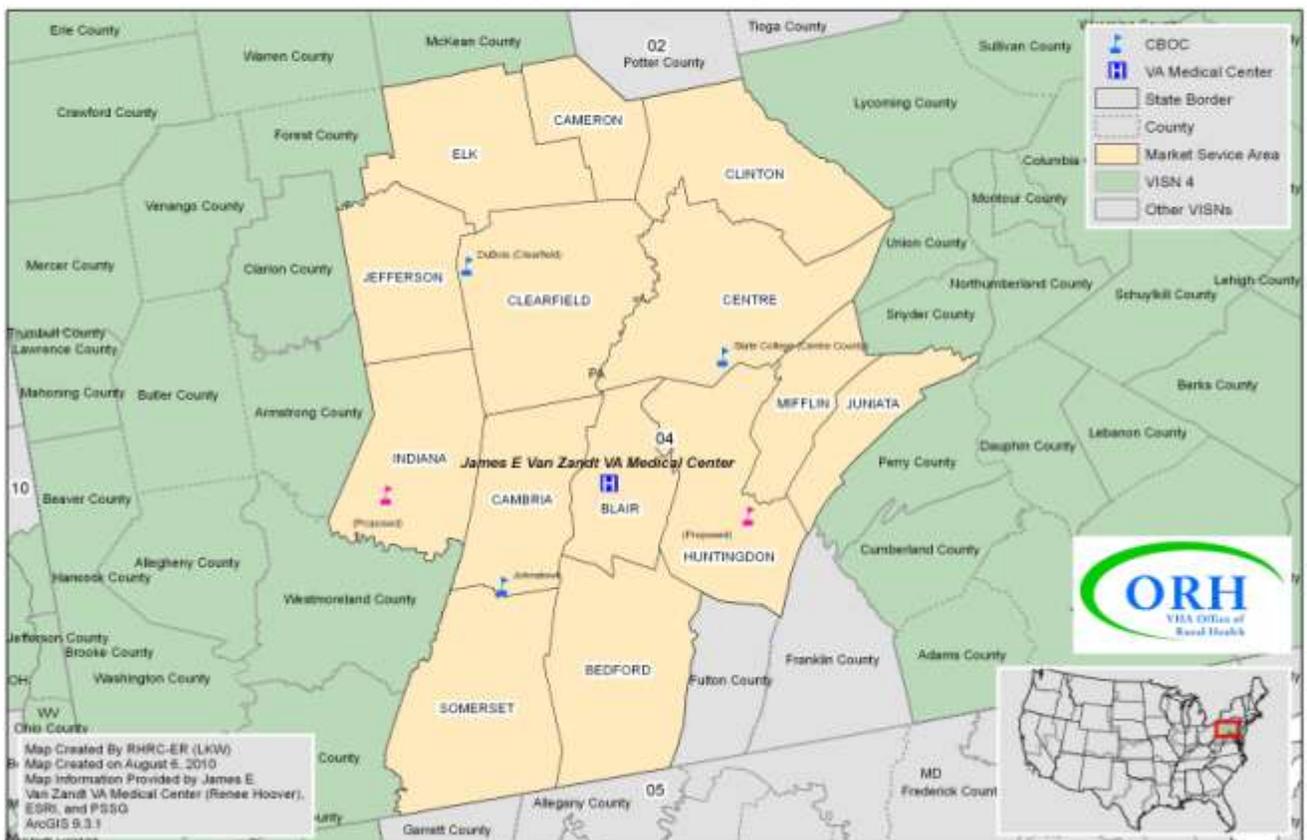
Based in convenient locations, CBOCs offer Veterans access to primary care, laboratory services, and some specialty care services such as audiology, podiatry, and optometry. In addition, CBOCs have social work and mental health staff to assist Veterans with issues that are not of a physical nature.

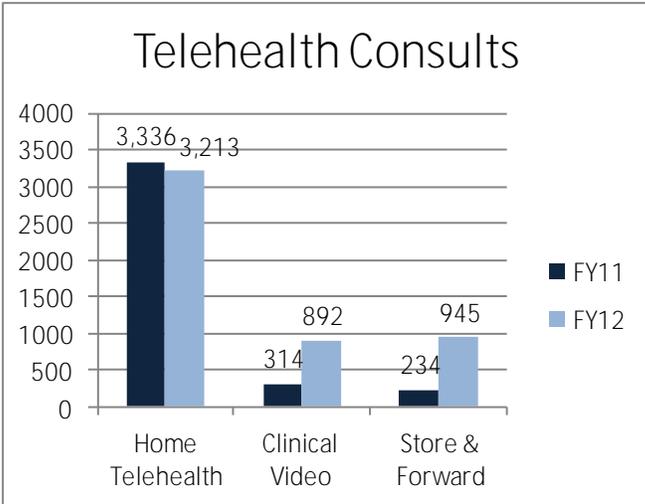
In 2012, our current CBOCs served the following number of our Nation's Heroes:

- DuBois: 4,080 Veterans
- Johnstown: 4,939 Veterans
- State College: 3,947 Veterans

Our planning, contracting, and medical specialists have been collaborating since July to develop criteria, statements of work, and request for proposal packages for both the Indiana and Huntingdon County CBOCs. Each of these locations will be contracted as a turn-key operation with contractors bidding on the entire project from building to operation of the clinic. The three operating CBOCs we have in DuBois, Johnstown, and State College are staffed and managed by VA.

James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center Market Service Area





Our region is mostly rural and travel can be burdensome. We cover 14 counties and there are over 87,000 Veterans in this region.

Of those, we serve about 25,000 Veterans at our medical center in Altoona and Community Based Outpatient Clinics in DuBois, Johnstown, and State College. Access to specialty care and behavioral health services can be a challenge.

VA is aggressively developing virtual care modalities that will create better access to care for Veterans. These include, tele-health, Secure Messaging, and My HealthVet.

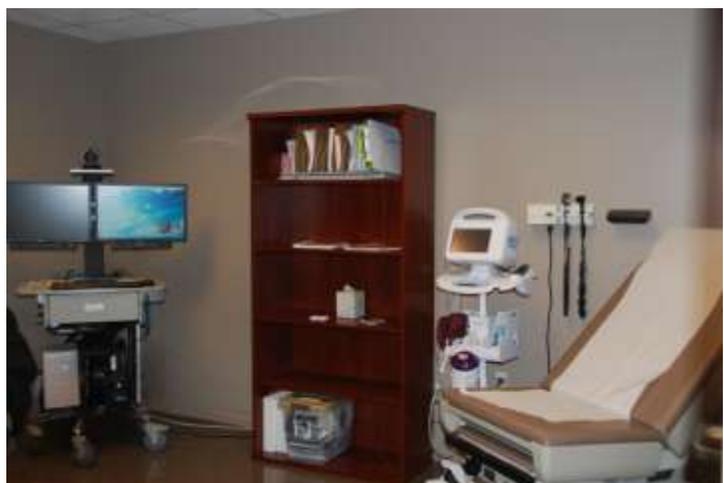
In 2012, our tele-health encounters increased by 30% over 2011. Our number of patients enrolled in My HealthVet increased by 123% and the number of Veterans who could access their providers through Secure Messaging increased by 248%.

In a changing health care environment, we need to become more efficient with the clinical resources we have, and encourage more active participation of our patients in their health care. Tele-health and other virtual medicine services achieve this by engaging providers and Veterans in new and more convenient ways.

In 2012 there were 296 providers, nurses, clerks and other professionals trained in Secure Messaging.

There were 6,076 Veterans registered and in-person-authenticated, enabling them to send and receive secure messages with their health care team.

In 2013 all behavioral health, social workers, prosthetics, and physical medicine and rehabilitation providers and staff will be trained in Secure Messaging.



Many treatment rooms are equipped with tele-health equipment such as video cameras and large viewing screens.

Through VA health care, Veterans have the advantage of getting all of their health care needs met by a **coordinated system of providers and services**. Our goal is to offer patients a full spectrum of care ranging from primary to specialty to long term care—all in an environment that puts the patient at the center of his or her treatment team.

The Patient Aligned Care Team (**PACT**) primary care model offers the patient a team of health care professionals. The **PACT** is led by a physician or a physician extender, and includes other experts such as nurses, social workers, dietitians, pharmacists, and other specialists. The **PACT** works with the patient's goals in mind, and assists them to make the best choices about treatment.

“Before I do a treatment plan for a patient, I listen. That’s how I find out what’s important to him and what will motivate him to do the hard work of regaining physical abilities. If you can’t show him what’s in it for him, he’s not going to be motivated to do the work. Maybe he wants to go fishing. Maybe he wants to play with his kids. If you listen, you can learn a lot that will help you help the patient.”

- Dr. Frederick Struthers, Chief, Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Service

In 2012, we achieved four of the five “compass metrics” for PACT that were established for all VA medical centers. These included:

Two day contact with the patient post discharge from acute care: 85% (benchmark 50%)

Primary care **provider continuity** 89% (benchmark 75%)

Ratio of primary care telephone encounters to all encounters 22% (benchmark 20%)

All primary care patients **seen in primary care within seven days** of desired date: 90% (benchmark 90%)

Measure Not Met:

Same day appointments with primary care provider: 50% (benchmark 66%)



State of the art equipment, including an aqua therapy treadmill helps rehabilitation staff to create effective treatment plans for Veterans.



Patient centered care (PCC) gives our patients and residents the freedom to set goals and implement their own plan to optimize their own health and well-being. **This shift from a disease and problem based system to a health promotion system** is happening nationwide in VA and in community health care settings.

PCC includes some of the following elements:

- Open access to medical records
- Healing physical surroundings
- Involvement of family and other loved ones
- Shared decision making between clinician and patient
- Personalized health planning

Network Director, Michael Moreland and medical center Director, William Mills, walk through the new addition to the Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation building. The addition provides office space for OEF/OIF Case Managers, TBI specialists, and the prosthetics department. Bringing all of these resources into one building provides for patient centered care in this one specialty area.

In 2012, the opening of our sixth floor Community Living Center (CLC) moved us further along the PCC spectrum for the residents of the CLC by transforming the way we offer long term care services to Veterans.

This new environment offers residents a more home-like, independent living setting, where they are free to make more choices about their schedule, diet, and other daily life options.



Eliminating Homelessness among Veterans

Eliminating homelessness among Veterans is a major initiative nationwide. Our goal is to help Veterans acquire safe housing, needed treatment services, and opportunities to return to employment. We achieved many milestones toward this goal in Fiscal Year 2012.

Vouchers are offered through the Department of Housing and Urban Development as part of the VA Supportive Housing program (HUD/VASH). They are accepted by approved landlords as payment toward monthly rent. We used our full allotment of 35 vouchers, enabling this number of Veterans and their families to secure housing. In the third quarter, we were awarded 25 new vouchers for Indiana County and began working with community agencies there.

72 Veterans were given a safe place to live temporarily at **Tomorrow's Hope**, a transitional housing program.

We contracted with a local emergency shelter and entered into a new contract with a shelter in DuBois to provide housing women Veterans and their children.

A Stand Down for Homeless Veterans was held in July, and attended by 129 people, including 75 Veterans. Eight community agencies sponsored booths. A Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups (CHALENG)/Summit meeting was attended by 39 participants representing 26 community agencies. The meeting is held annually to bring together all the agencies in our service area who work with homeless Veterans.

Other programs that support homeless Veterans include Supportive Employment, Substance Use Disorder Treatment, Veterans Justice Outreach and a Homeless Veterans Needy Fund of donated money.



Holly Serface, Director of Veterans Affairs for Centre County, accepts a non-perishable bag lunch and a backpack with personal care items for homeless Veterans from Chief, Social Work, John Grove. Each county office received supplies for homeless Veterans in the winter of 2012.



A Veteran receives a hair cut at the Stand Down. The event is designed to offer homeless Veterans a day of care and access to community supports.

The homeless programs were certified by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) for a three year period.

\$13,997 was donated to the homeless needy fund by Veteran Service Organizations and individuals. The money was used to help with security deposits, utility payments and other necessities to assist Veterans to gain housing or to stay in their homes.

Improvements enhance the patient's experience



Our Engineering and Construction budget for 2012 included \$872,902 for engineering and \$12,136,958 for construction.

Nine projects were completed in 2012, including the second phase of the physical medicine and rehabilitation program which offers space for prosthetics, TBI clinicians, and OEF/OIF/OND staff.

The retail canteen store was remodeled and all parking lots were re-paved and expanded.

A new behavioral health building was designed and is anticipated to break ground in 2013.



People Centered

Left to Right, Top to Bottom:

Children participate in “Take Your Daughters and Sons to Work Day” and learn about all aspects of the medical center’s operations.

Staff load food donations headed to the local food pantry as part of the Feds Feed Families Food Drive. 2,530 pounds of food was donated.

Associate Director, Charles T. Becker, and Chaplain Klavens Noel participate in Armed Forces Day Ceremonies with speaker, **Command Sergeant Major Timothy M. Hileman, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion.**

A Veteran is given information on infection control at the annual Health Fair.

Two Veterans cut the ribbon to celebrate the opening of our new Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation building.

Facility and union leadership serve an employee appreciation luncheon.

Two Veterans were guests at Penn State Altoona’s Distinguished Speaker Series featuring J.R. Martinez. Martinez is a wounded OIF Veteran who has performed on Dancing with the Stars.

The leadership team poses with their Flu Quarterback jerseys to kick off the flu vaccination program.

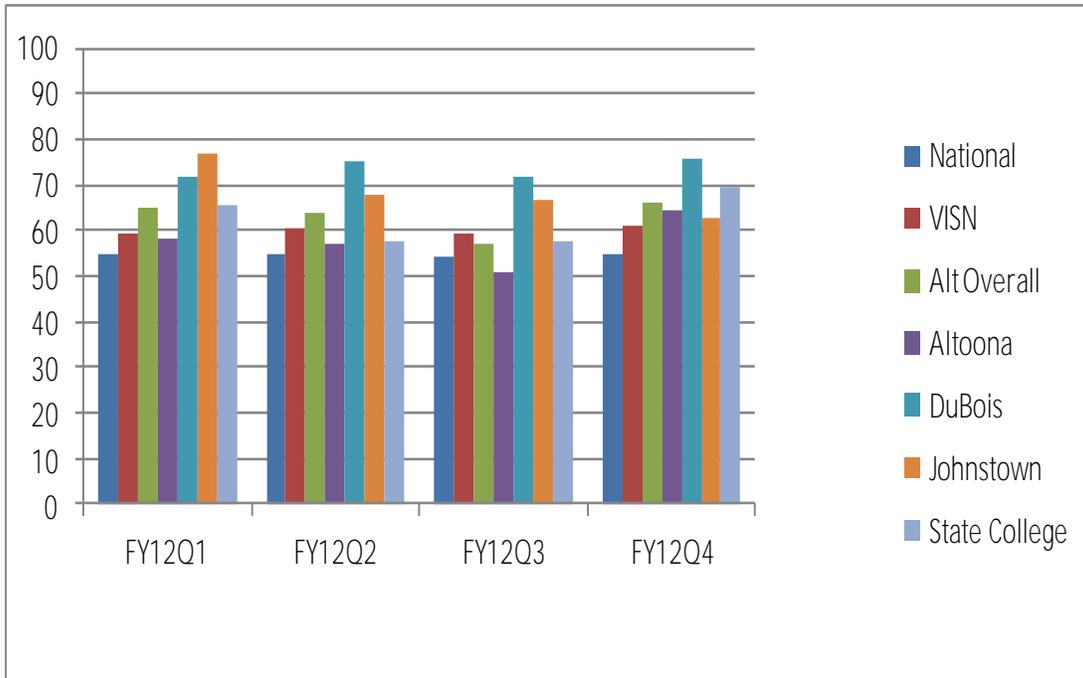
Two World War II Former Prisoners of War talk at the POW/MIA commemoration.

Volunteer, Virginia Greiner, received her 25,000 hour award at our 62nd Annual Volunteer Recognition Ceremony. She has volunteered for 29 years under the Senior Companion Program.

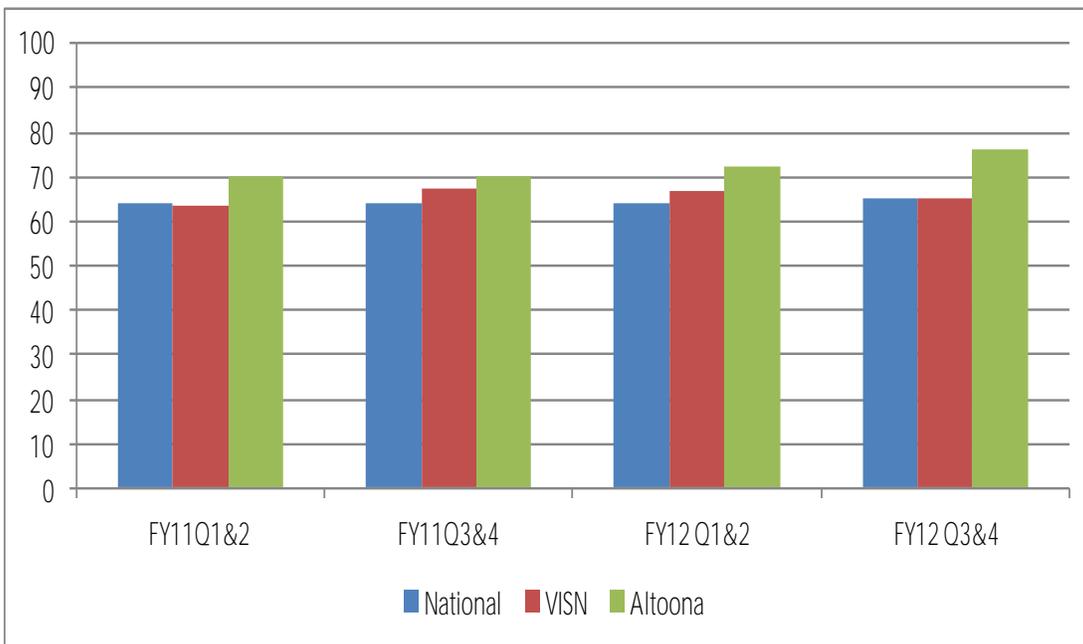
Over 77 staff, Veterans, and community members participated in the VA2K to promote wellness and to support the Homeless Veterans program.



Outpatient Overall Satisfaction*



Inpatient Overall Satisfaction*



*Survey of Healthcare Experiences of Patients (SHEP)

“During my stay I was cared for by many of your staff nurses and doctors. I am very pleased with my care and would recommend this hospital to any Veteran needing care. Though I do not wish to be in the hospital again for a long time, it made me proud to know that my 20 years of service in the United States Navy meant so much to so many. Thank you very much for caring about the service **members.”**

-Veteran Patient



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HEALTH CARE | **EXCELLENCE**
in the 21st Century

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Leadership Team



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Associate Director



Santha Kurian, MD
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